set up a nuclear safety research institute in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the purpose of setting up such institute and to what extent it will suggest ways and means to provide safety to our nuclear installations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has set up a Safety Research Institute (SRI) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. Selected aspects of research relating to nuclear power plant safety, radiological and environmental safety, fire and industrial safety will be addressed during the initial phase of the project. The main objective of the SRI will be to carry out and promote safety related research in selected areas of relevance to regulatory decision making. SRI will bring together designers, operators and regulators for implementation of research programmes aimed at resolving safety related issues.

Bilateral relations with France

2522. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govt. have any proposal to improve bilateral relations with France;

(b) if so, the various steps taken in the direction during last three years;

(c) the outcome thereof;

(d) the fresh negotiations proposed to be made thereof; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, The Government have taken a number of steps for upgrading the bilateral relationship with France. A number of agreements have been signed and high level visits exchanged between the two countries, including that of President Chirac of France to India in January, 1998 and our Prime Minister to Paris in September, 1998.

Mr. Jean Claude Gayssot, the French Cabinet Minister for Capital Works, Housing & Transport visited India from 1—4 February, 1999. During the visit a Protocol of Intent for Cooperation in the Road Sector and a Protocol of Intent for Cooperation in Railways were signed.

An indo-French Forum has also been established to advise the two governments on ways and means for augmenting mutually beneficial bilateral linkages.

(c) There has been an increase in educational, scientific, cultural, commercial and economic exchanges between the two countries.

(d) and (e) The process of bilateral consultations is proposed to be continued and expanded further to the mutual benefit of both countries.

सुरक्षा परिषद् में सदस्यता के लिए समर्थन जुटाने हेतु विदेश यात्रा

2523. **श्री गोपाल सिंह जी सोलंकी:** क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) सुरक्षा परिषद् में सदस्यता हेतु भारत के प्रयासों के लिए समर्थन जुटाने/निमित प्रचार करने की दृष्टि से अब तक विदेश मंत्रालय के कितने अधिकारियों ने विदेश यात्राएं की है;

(ख) उस अधिकारियों ने कौन-कौन से देशों की यात्रा की और वे वहां पर किन-किन अधिकारियों से मिले; और

(ग) इन अधिकारियों द्वारा अपने दौरे के संबंध में प्रस्तुत प्रतिवेदन का ब्यौरा क्या है; और यदि नहीं तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे): (क) से (ग) संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद् के पुनर्गठन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के ओपन एन्डिड कार्यकारी दल में बहस जारी है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद् के विस्तार या सुधार के मसले पर अभी तक कोई सहमति नहीं हुई है। यद्यपि स्थायी सदस्यता के लिए भारत की उम्मीदवारी की बात संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के 53वें सत्र को संबोधित करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री ने अपने भाषण में दोहराई थी और इस मामले को द्विपक्षीय यात्राओं के दौरान भी उठाया गया था, तथापि विदेश मंत्रालय इस चरण पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद् की स्थायी सदस्यता हेतु भारत की उम्मीदवारी